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THE

WORK AND MISSION

OF

LIBERIA.

BY

EDWARD S. MORRIS,

OF

PHILADELPHIA.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

PHILADELPHIA:
PENNSYLVANIA COLONIZATION ROOMS,
609 WALNUT STREET.

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Extract from the Minutes of the Board of Managers of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society at the Monthly Meeting held in Philadelphia, Nov. 9th, 1880.

In answer to a request of the Board, at a meeting held September 14th, 1880, Mr. Edward S. Morris prepared and read a Paper on his Educational work in Liberia, and gave some interesting facts concerning the Medina and Vey tribes, and the desire by the former of annexation to the Liberian Republic. He also stated that the teachers for his school at Arthington had sailed on the 1st of November.

A vote of thanks was tendered Mr. Morris for his interesting paper, and a Committee consisting of the Rev. James Saul, D.D., and Wm. V. Pettit, Esq., appointed to have five hundred copies printed for distribution.

HENRY L. PHILLIPS,

Recording Secretary.

To the Hon. ELI K. PRICE, President,

AND TO THE

BOARD OF MANAGERS

OF THE

PENNSYLVANIA COLONIZATION SOCIETY.

Gentlemen:—In answer to the request of this Board at its monthly meeting, September 14th, it is my pleasure not only to repeat the statements I then made, but to add not a little thereto.

When in May last, I went to New York to see 136 Freedmen embark for Liberia, I asked them why this emigration? Who encouraged them to go? With one voice they replied, "This movement comes from our own hearts. God put it there."

The proposed annexation to Liberia of the Medina country, with its native population of half a million of people, two hundred miles in the interior, is one of great significance.

If I properly understood Dr. Edward W. Blyden in a late conversation, this annexation comes from no positive or direct action of either the Liberian Government or its citizens, but from the general influence of the Christian Republic, as represented by its laws, its Churches, its homes of social life, and true refinement and the general industry of the people. May we not say, "Heaven hath a hand in these events."

This particular and self-moved action of the native tribes of Africa, if not prevented by the British Government, should of itself settle the boundary question between Sierra-Leone and Liberia, about which our United States Government lately acted as arbitrator through Com. Schufeldt, of the war ship Ticonderoga.

When in England last year, I read with heartfelt pleasure the comments of the *London Times* and the *Echo;* the former remarked:

"This annexation is without a parallel in ancient or modern history, and in this day of standing armies it is pleasing to know that it comes from the opening hearts and minds of the people, and will be concluded by the pen,—not the sword." While the latter influential publication said, "The Liberian Republic is among the greatest moral and social experiments of our time."

The influence of the Medina people has favorably operated upon other tribes. By Treaty, dated 25th of June, 1880, between the kings and princes of the Vey tribe and the President of Liberia, occurs the following: "This tribe acknowledges and confirms forever the absolute and sovereign power of the Liberian Government over their territory and country above-named, hereby binding ourselves, our heirs, our respective subjects and our successors in office, to observe and keep the laws of the Republic of Liberia, and obey all orders emanating from the President, or any Superintendent or Commissioner duly appointed by the Government of Liberia."

Article 5th provides, "In case of dispute which cannot be settled between ourselves, (*i. e.*, their own tribal differences) then, in that case, the same shall be referred to the President of the Republic of Liberia for his decision thereon, which we hereby promise, covenant and agree, to observe and obey on our part. Any violation of the promises of this agreement by any of the above-named chiefs, he or they shall be regarded as a common enemy to the well-being, happiness and prosperity of the country, and shall be punished by the Government of Liberia, according to the laws of the land. The Government of Liberia on its part, promises to promote foreign and domestic trade by opening ports of entry and trading posts."

Mr. President: having been among these people, I can testify of what my eyes have seen, my hands handled, and I venture nothing when I say the native tribes around about Liberia desire the school-house and the Christian Church quite as much, if not

more, than the port of entry and trading post. Let Liberia send the school teacher with the hoe and the Bible, as well as the Customs Collector.

The Liberian Government has done well in the 8th and 9th articles of this agreement, promising to promote and foster the educational interests of these tribes. In article 10, the tribes hereby agree to send or cause their children to be sent to school, as well as to contribute to the support of the same according to the laws of Liberia regulating taxes.

This treaty was signed by kings and princes in the presence of three commissioners, appointed by Anthony W. Gardner, President of Liberia. These treaties will come before the Legislature of Liberia at its Annual Session in January next. Dr. Blyden told me he would be present, and encourage their confirmation. This, then, is *the work and mission of Liberia*, — to take the natives by the hand and educate them into the paths of civilization and Christianity,—thus preparing the land and people for the reception of many of our Freedmen, now looking to their fatherland through the vestibule—Christian Liberia, the open door to heathen Africa.

As with the answer of the Freedmen of America GOING TO Africa, so now is richly blended the reply from kings and princes IN Africa. "THIS MOVEMENT COMES FROM OUR OWN HEARTS. GOD PUT IT THERE."

Looking to these, our Freedmen, Thomas Jefferson, with the pen of prophecy, wrote:

"Going from a country possessing all the useful arts, they might be the means of transplanting them among the inhabitants of Africa, and would thus carry back to the country of their origin the seeds of civilization, which might render their sojournment here a blessing in the end to that country." As a confirmation of this; what said the great statesman, Henry Clay? "Although I may be thought extravagant in my view, I declare

that of all the projects of the age, there is none to compare with that great project of transporting the free people of color in the United States, with their own consent, to the coast of Africa."

Mr. President, as we sit here month after month, and year after year, as Managers of the Pennsylvania Colonization Society, prayerfully considering the elevation of a race and the redemption of a continent, how encouraging are the above facts and the words of Theodore Frelinghuysen, and our late fellow-citizen, Joseph R. Ingersoll; the former said, "The more this noble scheme develops itself, the more diversified become the aspects in which it awakens our admiration, and conciliates our esteem." While the latter exclaimed, "I do not understand how any one can look at the facts as they now stand forth to the world, and not be convinced of the great wisdom and high claims of this enterprise."

My fellow-members of this Society will be pleased to learn that I have seen my way clear to send two teachers for my school to be located at Arthington, the most interior settlement in Liberia. Mrs. Ogden and her son.

I am quite sure, Mr. President, the following interesting circumstance is worthy of record in this society:

In 1832 the Rev. Benjamin Ogden, pastor of the church in Pennington, N. J., had a son born to him, whom he named Thomas Spencer Ogden. He graduated at the University at Ann Arbor, Mich., in 1853. He entered the Theological Seminary at Princeton, in 1854, and was licensed to preach in 1857, and was ordained as a missionary to Africa, on the 18th of August of the same year. On September 17th he married Miss Phœbe E. Combs, daughter of Lewis L. Combs, Esq., an elder in the Presbyterian Church of Millstone, N. J.

They sailed from New York on October 6, 1857, and arrived at Corisco Island, January 14, 1858. He immediately began to teach the Benga boys, then at Evangasimba, but soon afterwards,

with all the boys, was transferred to Ugobi. In June, 1859, he was seized with typhoid fever, and in hope of a more speedy recovery he was removed to Evangasimba, where he soon resumed the instruction of the boys who were candidates for licensure in the Ugobi school. In 1860 he suffered another attack of fever, and by medical advice made a voyage to Fernando Po and Calabar, which re-established his health.

On his return he put his hand to all manner of work in fitting up the house and school, teaching boys and girls, in which he was zealously assisted by Mrs. Ogden. But on the 1st of October, on account of their inability to withstand the climate, the Board gave them leave to return to America. In view of the destitute state of the mission, after earnest prayer, they both decided to remain. He took up his residence at the school, and in addition to the other duties of the mission, turned his attention to the translation of the Gospel according to St. Luke into one of the African languages. The great object of his life was to rear up a native ministry, and for this he struggled against a hostile climate, not counting his life dear unto himself.

Early in the spring of 1851 it became evident that he would experience another attack of fever, and an attempt was made to ward it off by the use of medicine. He lived till the 12th of May, 1851, when he fell at the post of duty. His dying words were, "*Who will go? Can you go? Who will go to preach in Africa?*" He left behind him Mrs. Ogden, with a child a few weeks old. Mrs. Ogden has had four years experience teaching the native youth, and now renews her labors, but with her son, a full counterpart of his devoted father. While she will teach with the book in the school, he will lead the boys in the field with the hoe, thus not only blending the industrial with the literary, but looking to the day when the school will be self-supporting.

I have sent with my teachers all the necessary school books,

charts, maps, globes, black-boards and modern school desks for thirty-six boys. Bibles, Testaments and Psalms in Arabic and English, also enough material to clothe fifty boys for one entire year, and a sewing machine. I hope soon to raise sufficient funds to send a modern school-house of frame to Liberia, the plan of which is now before us.

This school-house, as you see, is to seat fifty boys, and provide a comfortable home for the teachers. With this proposed light-house for the dark continent, there must go a printing press with Arabic and English type, a full working loom, and a cabinet organ to help in the songs of praise. To prepare the way for this work in Africa, Mrs. Ogden and her manly son sailed on the 1st of this month from New York, on the barque Liberia, direct for Arthington, and are now upon the ocean.

May I not say that the prayer of the great and good Dr. Ogden "*who will go to preach in Africa*,"—has been heard, recorded and answered? Let us unite in committing the mother and son to Him who "is mightier than many waters, yea, than the mighty waves of the sea."

If all is well, the school-bell will ring at Arthington, January 1st, 1881. This information is now on its way to my new-made friends in England, who promised me their influence in obtaining for my school the sons of chiefs from the Niger Valley and Soudan, where exist to-day tens of millions of human beings, may I not say the flower of the Negro race, a people free from the sin of slavery and the curse of intoxicants, all waiting for the Christian school-house, and to learn the truth as it is in Jesus.

Africa!! What a land is this Africa. Well may Victor Hugo exclaim, "Let us take that land from whom? from no one. God has given that land to man! Let us take it, not by the spear, but by the pruning hook. Not by the sword, but by the plough-share."

609 WALNUT STREET.
Philadelphia, 11th mo., 9th. 1880.